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they were turned into one alphabet, a process involving the handling of about two million papers. From the latest muster rolls envelopes or "jackets" are being typed for each man, to contain his enlistment papers, any personal papers, his service record when mustered out, etc.

In the bureau of war risk insurance applications and subsequent correspondence are filed numerically, with an alphabetical index. This will probably be the largest alphabetical index of names in the world, as the record will include all enlisted men, whether insured or not; giving the reasons for failure to take out insurance where men have not desired to avail themselves of it. The allotment sec-

tion of the bureau of war risk insurance is still another index.

A complete central occupational card index is being assembled, giving occupational qualifications of every registrant. These cards are arranged by symbolic numbers for occupations, with geographical extensions of numbering. Besides this occupational index of registrants, there is a card catalog of educational, occupational and military qualifications of every enlisted man.

Finally, as it takes money as well as some other things to win the war, there may be mentioned the file of income tax returns, arranged geographically and by size of income, the file comprising about thirteen million entries.

### COST REDUCTION IN CATALOGING

By T. FRANKLIN CURRIER, *Assistant Librarian, Harvard College Library*

In the industrial world a lowering of the cost and a more finished product resulted from the transfer of the process of manufacture from the home and small shop to the factory. The centralization of cataloging by placing it in the hands of a large institution which has every facility for doing it well and economically has had a similar result in the library world. Further improvements and economies will undoubtedly result from further centralization and greater coördination of effort on the part of catalogers. It is to the catalog departments of our larger libraries that we look for the realization of such plans, but it is just these departments that are finding increasing costs and inelastic budgets most burdensome, and it is here, therefore, that the greatest demand exists for studying carefully the relation of quantity and quality of output to cost.

It is our duty as catalogers by mutual conference to pool experiences, marshal facts and figures, study the relation of our work to the problems of larger library ad-

ministration and thus reinforced to bring about an intelligent and sustained pressure for adequate support. At the same time we must promote and prepare for increased resources by learning how to utilize to the utmost those now at our command. We must study carefully the cost of production, take advantage of every method that leads to economy, prune away with ruthlessness each process the value of which we cannot prove. This, I take it is the aim of our conference to-day.

In response to your chairman's request I might enumerate the labor-saving devices I have found useful. A symposium of such papers would suggest to each one of us specific methods that we have not ourselves stumbled on, but I refrain, for the essential thing that we wish to teach to our staff is not so much individual specific methods as the habit of mind that will instinctively plan each piece of work in the best way and avoid inefficient procedure.

I should like then to consider the economies resulting from the application

of some of the essentials of efficient management. The ones I select are formulating correct ideals of work, care in selecting and training assistants, correct supervision and flexibility of organization. By paying strict attention to these, economy of production must surely ensue.

The need of formulating for our assistants the fundamental aims and ideals of their tasks is not ordinarily suggested in discussions of economy of work, but a vast deal of time is wasted by those who, because they lack a proper perspective, try to do something that has no excuse for being done. Did you ever ask one of your catalogers to formulate the aims of your catalog?

At present, I should formulate the principal aim of the Harvard catalog, in so far as the author entries are concerned, not as the forming of a repertory of titles, each bibliographically complete, but as the providing of a handy tool to bring to the searcher, with as little trouble and delay as possible, a given book. If, then, I see a cataloger carefully verifying each name from a series of reference books and crowning her labors by triumphantly adding to her heading an unused name, I ask her whether her expenditure has helped or hindered the user of the catalog.

Next in order to the formulation of ideals comes the selection of persons who are carrying them out, and training them in the intricacies of the work. This matter has been frequently the subject of discussion at our meetings and I will not discuss it here, but I cannot pass it by without mention, for it is an altogether too important part of that process by which we hope some day to emulate Henry Ford's boasted 100 per cent efficiency and to prevent filling the round holes of our catalog peg board with square pegs. The expense involved in the attempts of a cataloger to do work for which she is not suited or for which she has not been trained must be prevented; and it can be forestalled or cured by careful selection and systematic instruction.

I am told that the major in our army is the highest officer who comes in immediate contact with the men—in the battle higher officers handle units—the major handles men. The supervisors in our large catalog staffs have this privilege and duty. On them rests the responsibility of seeing that accurate, intelligent and scholarly work is produced by an economical expenditure of money and energy on the part of the catalogers. Real economy can be obtained only if correct principles of supervision are taught and insisted on. To illustrate by example, each person called to supervise even a small piece of work must realize that her first duty is to see that those under her are working intelligently and productively and with enough work planned ahead. When she is assured of this state of affairs she can then and only then apply her own time to detailed and routine work; but she must constantly be on the alert not to absorb herself so deeply in her own routine work that she loses track of her assistants. If she does, they will listen to wrong advice from each other, pile up work incorrectly done, or mark time, even though they have the best intentions in the world. Again, the supervisor must guard against the constant temptation of habitually doing things herself because she can do them so much better or faster than her helpers. There is no eventual economy in this, for three out of four times the helper will lose the sense of responsibility, as well as the discipline of doing harder work and quite possibly will be wasting time while her supervisor is doing her work for her. The supervisor should remember that growth comes with the opportunity of doing.

It may sound mercenary, but I make no apologies for my belief that the supervisor should get in the habit of thinking of work done under her charge in terms of dollars and cents. She will be much less likely to authorize a doubtful bit of work if she knows it will take five dollars out of her budget than if she looks on it as merely a few hours' postponement of a more im-

portant job. There is tonic in the realization that a half hour's conference of two or three catalogers over a knotty point really costs a dollar or two, for this knowledge may result the next time in a straight decision, without conference, that costs ten cents.

The last essential to which I wish to call your attention is flexibility of organization within the department and in its relation to other departments. The question of proper division of work is one that cannot be settled once for all—it will vary in different libraries, and even in a given library, according to the nature of the work and personnel of the workers. Rules for forwarding books must be made only to care for normal accessions flowing in from day to day, and these rules must be easily changeable in special instances. Sympathetic coöperation of catalogers and supervisors with the head of the department as well as between the librarian and different department heads will lead to saving by special routing of exceptional work. There are times when the duties of the accessions and order clerk blend closely with those of the catalogers. For example, the accessions department might well assume the labor of collating the plates and maps of an invoice of English books, but it would be waste of time for it to collate a volume printed before 1500 when the cataloger will feel it necessary

to do the work again in the process of properly cataloging it.

To sum up the points I have tried to make: Economy of work will be attained less by teaching, parrot like, specific devices than by building up a habit of efficiency and a common sense view of relativity in the importance of work. This can be attained best by raising the tone of the catalog staff through careful selection and training of assistants, by formulating the ideals and aims of our work, by training our supervisors in the principles of management and by promoting flexibility of organization within and between the departments. Furthermore, ideal conditions in the selection, training and supervision of the staff presuppose adequate financial return for labor. I do not dare hope for immediate realization of this happy state of affairs—the war is putting a severe strain on us in the way of budgets that are contracting in purchasing power even though on paper remaining normal, but those of us who are not called to active duty at the front or to its supporting lines may feed our patriotism by looking ahead to the future when the library will be called to do its full share in reconstructing and invigorating our mental and spiritual life. And we must prepare by establishing a foundation of efficiency in methods that will support the increased activities and responsibilities of that day of honorable peace for which we, as a nation, are striving.

## CATALOGING ECONOMIES: MEETING THE DEMANDS OF WAR SERVICE CATALOGING

BY MAY WOOD WIGGINTON, *Catalog Department, Louisville Free Public Library*

Those of us who have been doing camp library service have had to find just what are the barest essentials in cataloging and surely there is a lesson there for all catalogers.

The war is affecting libraries as it is affecting every phase of life. Libraries are feeling the pinch of the increased cost of

maintenance and the shortage of labor... and demands are coming in to help in this or that bit of war service....

In December, our camp library building was completed, the avalanche of books began to arrive and the problem before us was this: We had a fine big camp with some 40,000 soldiers in it, drilling hard,